

1. A computer-implemented method comprising:  
establishing a database containing data corresponding  
to a probability that words occur together in text;  
receiving a phrase comprised of the words;  
5 retrieving the data for the words from the database in  
response to receiving the phrase; and  
determining, based on the data, whether to perform a  
text search for the phrase as a whole or for the words  
individually.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein establishing the  
database comprises:  
searching through text from one or more documents; and  
determining a metric indicative of the probability  
15 that the words will occur together in the text of the one  
or more documents.

20 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the metric is  
determined based on a probability that the words will occur  
together and a probability that the words will occur  
individually.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the metric comprises a ratio of the probability that the words will occur together and the probability that the words will occur individually.

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5. The method of claim 2, wherein the one or more documents comprise World Wide Web pages.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein determining  
10 comprises:  
    comparing the data to a predetermined threshold;  
    performing the text search for the phrase as a whole  
if the data exceeds the predetermined threshold; and  
    performing the text search for the words individually  
15 if the data does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the text search is performed on another database.

20 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the other database comprises Web databases on the Internet.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the words comprise two or more words in series.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein, if it is  
5 determined to perform the text search for the phrase as a whole, the method further comprises:

performing the text search for the phrase as a whole.

11. The method of 10, further comprising:

10 performing the text search for the words individually after performing the text search for the phrase as a whole.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein, if it is  
determined to perform the text search for the words

15 individually, the method further comprises:

performing the text search for the words individually.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

issuing a message, based on a result of the

20 determining, asking whether to perform the text search for the phrase as a whole; and

performing the text search for the phrase as a whole or for the words individually based on a response to the message.

5           14. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more documents comprise a past query log.

10           15. A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium, the computer program comprising instructions that cause a machine to:

          establish a database containing data corresponding to a probability that words occur together in text;

          receive a phrase comprised of the words;

15           retrieve the data for the words from the database in response to receiving the phrase; and

          determine, based on the data, whether to perform a text search for the phrase as a whole or for the words individually.

20           16. The computer program of claim 15, wherein establishing the database comprises:

          searching through text from one or more documents; and

determining a metric indicative of the probability that the words will occur together in the text of the one or more documents.

5           17. The computer program of claim 16, wherein the metric is determined based on a probability that the words will occur together and a probability that the words will occur individually.

10           18. The computer program of claim 17, wherein the metric comprises a ratio of the probability that the words will occur together and the probability that the words will occur individually.

15           19. The computer program of claim 16, wherein the one or more documents comprise World Wide Web pages.

20           20. The computer program of claim 15, wherein determining comprises:

          comparing the data to a predetermined threshold;  
          performing the text search for the phrase as a whole if the data exceeds the predetermined threshold; and

performing the text search for the words individually  
if the data does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

21. The computer program of claim 20, wherein the  
5 text search is performed on another database.

22. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the  
other database comprises Web databases on the Internet.

10 23. The computer program of claim 15, wherein the  
words comprise two or more words in series.

24. The computer program of claim 15, further  
comprising:

15 instructions to perform the text search for the phrase  
as a whole if it is determined to perform the text search  
for the phrase as a whole.

25. The computer program of 24, further comprising:  
20 instructions to perform the text search for the words  
individually after performing the text search for the  
phrase as a whole.

26. The computer program of claim 15, further  
comprising instructions to perform the text search for the  
words individually if it is determined to perform the text  
5 search for the words individually.

27. The computer program of claim 15, further  
comprising instructions to:

10 issue a message, based on a result of the determining,  
asking whether to perform the text search for the phrase as  
a whole; and

perform the text search for the phrase as a whole or  
for the words individually based on a response to the  
message.

15 28. The computer program of claim 15, wherein the one  
or more documents comprise a past query log.

29. An apparatus comprising:

20 a memory that stores executable instructions; and  
a processor that executes the instructions to:  
establish a database containing data

corresponding to a probability that words occur  
together in text;

receive a phrase comprised of the words;

retrieve the data for the words from the database

5 in response to receiving the phrase; and

determine, based on the data, whether to perform  
a text search for the phrase as a whole or for the  
words individually.

10 30. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein establishing  
the database comprises:

searching through text from one or more documents; and

determining a metric indicative of the probability  
that the words will occur together in the text of the one  
15 or more documents.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the metric is  
determined based on a probability that the words will occur  
together and a probability that the words will occur  
20 individually.



32. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the metric comprises a ratio of the probability that the words will occur together and the probability that the words will occur individually.

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33. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the one or more documents comprise World Wide Web pages.

34. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein determining  
10 comprises:

comparing the data to a predetermined threshold;

performing the text search for the phrase as a whole  
if the data exceeds the predetermined threshold; and

performing the text search for the words individually  
15 if the data does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

35. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the text search is performed on another database.

20 36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the other database comprises Web databases on the Internet.

37. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the words  
comprise two or more words in series.

38. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the processor  
5 executes instruction to perform the text search for the  
phrase as a whole if it is determined to perform the text  
search for the phrase as a whole.

39. The apparatus of 38, wherein the processor  
10 executes instruction to perform the text search for the  
words individually after performing the text search for the  
phrase as a whole.

40. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the processor  
15 executes instruction to perform the text search for the  
words individually if it is determined to perform the text  
search for the words individually.

41. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the processor  
20 executes instructions to:

issue a message, based on a result of the determining,  
asking whether to perform the text search for the phrase as

a whole; and

perform the text search for the phrase as a whole or  
for the words individually based on a response to the  
message.

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42. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the one or  
more documents comprise a past query log.

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